



King County

Department of Judicial Administration

Barbara Miner

Director and Superior Court Clerk

(206) 296-9300 (206) 296-0100 TTY/TDD

King County Superior Court

2021 Annual Statistical Report

Department of Judicial Administration

January 20, 2022

Report #: YR-2021

Seattle:
516 Third Avenue Room E609
Seattle, WA 98104-2386

Regional Justice Center:
401 Fourth Avenue North Room 2C
Kent, WA 98032-4429

Juvenile Division:
1211 East Alder Room 3015
Seattle, WA 98122-5598

2021 Highlights

The coronavirus pandemic has greatly impacted the 2020 and 2021 statistics.

This annual statistical report presents information on filings, resolutions, pending caseload, and trials in King County Superior Court (KCSC). Because of the year-end update and adjustment, a slight difference may exist between the statistics in this annual report and the statistics in the quarterly reports.

- **Filings** (Table 1). The total number of cases filed in 2021 was 6% lower than that in 2020 (-6%). In 2021, the filing volume (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) was 43,131 cases. Total judicial filings (after excluding “Matters Filed with Clerk”) decreased by 6.6% from 2020 (-6.6%), totaling 40,249 cases. When compared with 2020, decrease in 2021 filings occurred in the following major categories: criminal filings (excluding criminal appeals) down 20.7%, civil down 11.3%, juvenile offender down 54.8%, juvenile dependency down 17%, and juvenile termination down 29.6%. Domestic and Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) filings in 2021 remained at the same level as in 2020. An increase in filings was observed in probate (+10.5%), guardianship (+45.8%), and parentage (+17.9%).
- **Resolutions** (Table 2). The total resolutions (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) in 2021 were 44,965 cases, comparable to the number of resolutions in 2020 (+2%). The court resolved more cases than the filings received in 2021. In particular, the court had more criminal resolutions than the criminal filings in 2021 due to a sizeable dismissal of Blake cases. However, the overall resolution volume was significantly lower than the pre-COVID level.
- **Pending Caseload** (Table 3). The overall pending caseload at the end of 2021 was 19,567 cases, showing a noticeable decrease from the end of 2020 (-14.8%) due to the low filings in most case types. All major case types had shown a decrease in pending caseload when compared to 2020: criminal down 20.3% (-20.3%), civil down 19.9% (-19.9%), domestic down 2.9% (-2.9%), and juvenile offender down 50% (-50%). Criminal pending caseload decreased from the historical high in 2020 due to Covid-19, however, the current pending criminal volume is still significantly higher than the pre-COVID level. It is worth noting that the court has many more un-resolved serious criminal cases in homicides, sex crimes, burglary 1st degree, and assaults (1st and 2nd degree).
- **Trials**. The court had more trials in 2021 than 2020, totaling 903 trials (243 jury trials and 660 non-jury trials) in 2021. This is a remarkable achievement during the pandemic time.
- **MRJC vs. SEA** (Table 4). Of the total 43,131 cases (including Matters filed with the Clerk) filed in 2021, 33% were MRJC cases. In 2021, the MRJC accounted for 45%, 41%, and 39% of total criminal, civil and domestic case filings, respectively. The MRJC resolutions (33%, as a percentage of total resolutions in KCSC) in 2021 were comparable to the 33% of filings at MRJC. At the end of 2021, the MRJC pending caseload was 36% of the entire court caseload, with 43% of the total active criminal cases, 33% of the total pending civil cases, and 42% of the total pending domestic cases.

Table 1. Annual Filings

Category	Annual Filings										2020-2021
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change
Criminal	5,942	6,045	6,213	6,237	6,632	6,441	5,989	6,607	5,877	4,658	-1,219
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	24,513	22,410	21,418	21,217	21,222	21,517	22,217	21,202	15,352	13,624	-1,728
Domestic	7,678	7,897	7,921	7,559	7,512	7,597	7,640	7,280	6,163	6,184	21
Probate	5,492	5,844	5,920	6,022	6,073	6,418	6,382	6,804	6,766	7,478	712
Guardianship	879	884	928	969	1,008	949	977	706	725	1,057	332
Adoption	511	483	470	460	458	546	445	483	431	347	-84
Parentage	1,161	931	702	650	528	539	512	526	340	401	61
Involuntary Treatment Act	3,591	3,678	3,852	4,004	4,152	4,694	4,910	4,985	5,131	5,159	28
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service /Others	242	203	285	217	247	245	292	206	187	251	64
Juvenile Dependency	853	893	940	848	727	793	788	811	435	361	-74
Juvenile Termination	197	209	321	214	219	304	344	225	291	205	-86
Juvenile Truancy	1,271	1,236	1,233	1,369	1,222	1,547	1,925	1,706	501	61	-440
Juvenile Offender	2,249	1,808	1,802	1,649	1,295	1,324	1,229	1,121	788	356	-432
Criminal RALJ	192	181	172	180	111	136	117	146	63	49	-14
Civil RALJ	63	53	47	57	66	65	68	81	53	58	5
Total Judicial Filings	54,834	52,755	52,224	51,652	51,472	53,115	53,835	52,889	43,103	40,249	-2,854
Civil Matters Filed with the Clerk ⁽¹⁾	15,046	13,763	12,240	9,581	8,742	10,903	9,036	10,030	2,784	2,882	98
Total Annual Filings	69,880	66,518	64,464	61,233	60,214	64,018	62,871	62,919	45,887	43,131	-2,756
Post-disposition Modifications (domestic/parentage) ⁽²⁾	1,972	1,962	1,943	1,844	1,890	1,916	1,766	752	575	622	

(1) “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consists of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

(2) Prior to 2019, the numbers included both “parenting” and “support only” modifications. Since 2019, only the “parenting” modifications are included.

Table 2. Annual Resolutions

Category	Annual Resolutions										2020-2021
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change
Criminal	5,594	5,832	6,002	6,413	5,915	6,162	5,780	5,788	4,085	5,639	1,554
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	25,688	23,506	22,551	22,066	21,230	21,544	21,399	21,389	14,765	14,509	-256
Domestic	7,713	7,915	7,861	7,885	7,479	7,564	7,696	7,295	5,998	6,224	226
Probate	5,356	5,770	5,842	5,874	5,948	6,182	6,134	6,764	6,417	7,078	661
Guardianship	874	847	948	910	988	906	915	656	668	803	135
Adoption	505	520	486	466	472	525	419	472	354	337	-17
Parentage	1,037	988	861	642	573	542	539	511	333	376	43
Involuntary Treatment Act	3,794	3,887	3,836	4,015	4,178	4,632	4,672	4,980	4,986	4,817	-169
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service /Others	233	233	272	222	286	239	230	183	192	261	69
Juvenile Dependency	838	982	976	716	888	753	708	688	498	398	-100
Juvenile Termination	207	215	227	243	265	234	299	187	170	284	114
Juvenile Truancy	1,135	1,187	813	948	1,385	1,535	1,300	1,632	1,769	588	-1,181
Juvenile Offender	2,150	1,738	1,616	1,533	1,401	1,179	1,252	1,034	831	624	-207
Criminal RALJ	186	179	161	173	159	128	127	134	136	76	-60
Civil RALJ	55	60	57	51	67	58	71	67	60	68	8
Total Judicial Resolutions	55,365	53,859	52,509	52,157	51,234	52,183	51,541	51,780	41,262	42,082	820
Civil Matters Filed with the Clerk ⁽¹⁾	15,046	13,763	12,240	9,581	8,737	10,905	9,027	10,032	2,780	2,883	103
Total Annual Resolutions	70,411	67,622	64,749	61,738	59,971	63,088	60,568	61,812	44,042	44,965	923

(1) “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consists of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

Table 3. Year-end Pending Caseload

Category	Year-end Pending Caseload ⁽²⁾										2020-2021
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change
Criminal	2,780	2,865	2,866	2,619	3,193	3,172	3,150	3,564	6,083	4,849	-1,234
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾)	8,507	7,936	7,148	6,747	7,798	7,203	8,243	8,576	7,778	6,234	-1,544
Domestic	4,458	4,486	4,579	4,234	4,337	4,366	4,381	4,384	4,445	4,317	-128
Probate	615	768	908	580	684	909	1,146	690	1,023	1,339	316
Guardianship	248	303	301	311	329	376	409	235	290	505	215
Adoption	199	166	149	147	135	155	174	184	258	260	2
Parentage	500	446	300	310	253	245	225	251	248	255	7
Involuntary Treatment Act	311	104	121	90	60	126	283	288	321	535	214
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service/Others	104	94	119	111	86	102	146	100	169	120	-49
Juvenile Dependency	394	386	414	474	300	357	434	647	467	241	-226
Juvenile Termination	122	121	225	164	128	196	244	277	382	248	-134
Juvenile Truancy	308	326	821	1,329	1,237	1,421	2,041	2,112	832	307	-525
Juvenile Offender	663	612	677	581	441	504	464	647	572	286	-286
Criminal RALJ	142	143	155	156	107	132	126	140	66	40	-26
Civil RALJ	45	38	28	33	31	41	38	51	43	31	-12
Year-end Total Pending Caseload⁽²⁾	19,396	18,794	18,811	17,886	19,119	19,305	21,504	22,146	22,977	19,567	-3,410

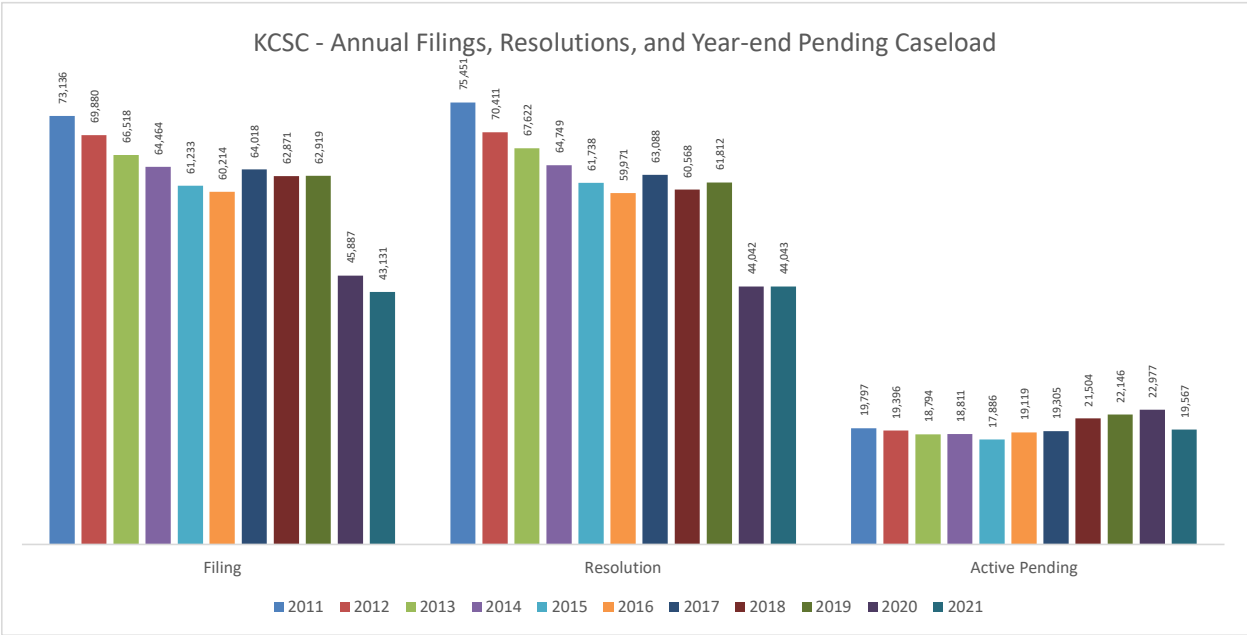
(1) The statistics in this table does not include “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk”. “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consists of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources and are resolved at the time of filing. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

(2) Pending caseload does not include cases on suspense status.

Table 4. Statistics by Location (SEA vs. MRJC)

Category	2021 Filings			2021 Resolutions			2021 Year-end Pending Caseload		
	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)
Criminal	45%	55%	4,658	38%	63%	5,639	43%	57%	4,849
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	41%	59%	13,624	41%	59%	14,509	33%	67%	6,234
Domestic	39%	61%	6,184	39%	61%	6,224	42%	59%	4,317
Probate	30%	70%	7,478	29%	71%	7,078	34%	66%	1,339
Guardianship	41%	59%	1,057	38%	62%	803	42%	58%	505
Adoption	25%	75%	347	23%	77%	337	32%	68%	260
Parentage	57%	43%	401	54%	46%	376	66%	34%	255
Involuntary Treatment Act	---	100%	5,159	---	100%	4,817	---	100%	535
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service /Others	38%	62%	251	35%	65%	261	34%	66%	120
Juvenile Dependency	37%	63%	361	46%	54%	398	33%	67%	241
Juvenile Termination	37%	63%	205	39%	61%	284	40%	60%	248
Juvenile Truancy	46%	54%	61	67%	33%	588	20%	80%	307
Juvenile Offender	---	100%	356	---	100%	624	---	100%	286
Criminal RALJ	20%	80%	49	9%	91%	76	23%	78%	40
Civil RALJ	17%	83%	58	24%	77%	68	16%	84%	31
Total Judicial Cases	33%	67%	40,249	33%	67%	42,082	36%	64%	19,567
Civil Matters Filed with the Clerk ⁽¹⁾	35%	65%	2,882	35%	65%	2,883	---	---	---
Total Cases	33%	67%	43,131	33%	67%	44,965	---	---	---

(1) “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consists of those civil cases that require little or no judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.



Appendix Definition

Active Status

A case is active if it is not on suspense status (see Suspense Status).

Adoption and Parentage Cases (case type 5)

ADP - Adoption
CFI - Confidential Intermediary
CHN - Confidential Change of Name
DIP - Disestablishment of Parentage
MDS - Modification/Support Only
MOD - Modification
MSC - Miscellaneous
OAA - Open Adoption Agreement
PAD - De Facto Parentage
PAG - Pre Birth Establish Parentage Genetic
PAS - Establish Parentage Gestational Surrogacy
PAT - Parentage
PPR - Initial Pre Placement Report
PRC - Parentage Rescission/Challenge
PUR - Parentage (URES/UIFSA)
REL - Relinquishment
ROB - Relocation Objection
TER - Termination of Parental Rights

Case

A case is defined as a filing with an assigned case number.

Civil Cases (case type 2, no RALJ)

ALR - Administrative Law Review
ALRLI - L&I Administrative Law Review
AOD - Assurance of Discontinuance
ASB - Asbestos
ASP - Asbestos Personal Injury
ASW - Asbestos Wrongful Death
BAT - Petition to Appeal/Amend Ballot Title
CAA - Motion to Confirm/Compel Arbitration Award
CFJ - Petition for Order Granting Judgment on Confession of Judgment
CHN - Non Confidential Change of Name
COL - Collection
COM - Commercial
CON - Condemnation
CRP - Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity
CRR - Petition for Certificate of Rehabilitation
DOL - Appeal Licensing Revocation
DSF - Notice of Deposit of Surplus Funds from Trustee's Sale of Real Property
DVP - Domestic Violence
ECP - Enforcement of Canadian Protection Order
EOM - Emancipation of Minor
FOR - Foreclosure
FPO - Foreign Protection Order
FVL - Motion to Show Cause /Fruivolous Lien
HAR - Unlawful Harassment
HSI - Application for Health & Safety Inspection
INJ - Injunction
IPL - Complaint for Interpleader
LUP - Land Use Petition
MAL - Other Malpractice
MED - Medical Malpractice
MER - Meretricious Relationships
MHA - Malicious Harassment
MSC - Miscellaneous
MST - Minor Settlement
MWP - Minor Work Permit
NJF - Non Judicial Filing
OSS - Petition to Issue Out of State Subpoena
PBC - Petition for Birth Certificate Change
PBJ - Petition for Justification /Bail Bond Company
PCC - Petition for Civil Commitment

PFA - Property Fairness Act
PIN - Personal Injury
PPT - Petition for Perpetuation of Testimony
PRA - Public Records Act
PRG - Property Damage /Gangs
PRP - Property Damage
PVO - Petition for Vehicle Ownership
QTI - Quiet Title
RCV - Petition to Appoint Receiver
RDR - Relief from Duty to Register
RFR - Restoration of Firearms Rights
RRC - Remove Restricted Covenant
SCA - Small Claims Appeal
SDR - School District /Required Action Plan
SER - Subdivision Election Process Law Review
SPC - Seizure of Property From Commission of a Crime
SPR - Seizure of Property Resulting From a Crime
STK - Stalking Protection
SXP - Sexual Assault Protection
TMV - Tort /Motor Vehicle
TSS - Petition for Approval of Transfer of Structured Settlement
TTO - Tort /Other
UND - Unlawful Detainer
VAP - Vulnerable Adult Protection Order
VEP - Voter Election Process Law Review
VVT - Victims of Motor Vehicle Theft /Civil Action
WDE - Wrongful Death
WHC - Writ of Habeas Corpus
WMW - Miscellaneous Writs
WRM - Writ of Mandamus
WRR - Writ of Restitution
WRV - Writ of Review
XRP - Extreme Risk Protection Order

Civil Matters Filed with Clerk (case type 2)

ABJ - Abstract of Judgment
FJU - Foreign Judgment
TAX - Tax Warrants
TRJ - Transcript of Judgment

Civil RALJ Cases (case type 2)

LCA - Lower Court Appeal /Civil
LCI - Lower Court Appeal /Infractions

Completion

A case is completed if dispositive document is filed with the court following resolution.

Criminal Cases (case type 1, no RALJ)

Adult criminal cases, excluding appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction. This reporting category includes the following crime categories within SCOMIS case type 1:

Homicide
Sex Crime
Robbery
Assault
Theft/Burglary
Motor Vehicle Theft
Controlled Substance
Others

Criminal RALJ Cases (case type 1)

CRJ - Criminal RALJ

Domestic Cases (case type 3)

CIR - Committed Intimate Relationship
CUS - Child Custody
DIC - Dissolution w/ Children
DIN - Dissolution no Children
DIS - Dissolution
DPC - Dissolution of Domestic Partnership w/ Children
DPN - Dissolution of Domestic Partnership /No Children
FJU - Out of State Support Registration /Foreign Judgment
INC - Annulment /Inv of Marriage w/ Children
IND - Annulment /Inv of Domestic Partnership w/ Children
INP - Invalidity, Domestic Partnership
INV - Annulment /Invalidity
MDS - Modification/Support Only
MOD - Modification
MSC - Miscellaneous
MWA - Mandatory Wage Assignment
OSC - Out of State Custody
PPS - Parenting Plan / Child Support
PSO - Petition for Entry of KC Support Order
RCV - Relative Child Visitation
RIC - Reciprocal, Resp in County
ROB - Relocation /Objection
ROC - Reciprocal, Resp out of County
RVC - Relative Child Visits
SDC - Legal Separation, Domestic Partnership w/ Children
SEC - Legal Separation w/ Children
SEP - Legal Separation
SPD - Legal Separation, Domestic Partnership /No Children
TSS - Structured Settlement

Jury Trial

A hearing is reported as a jury trial if the jury is impaneled.

Juvenile BECCA Cases (case type 7)

ARY - At Risk Youth
CNS - Child In Need Of Services
DDP - Developmental Disability
DGN - Dependency Guardianship
EFC - Extended Foster Care, Dependency
GFC - Guardianship Foster Children
RPR - Reinstatement of Parental Rights
RVS - Relative Visitation
TRU - Truancy
VYG - Vulnerable Youth Guardianship

Juvenile Dependency Cases (case type 7)

DEP – Dependency
TER - Termination of Parental Rights

Juvenile Offender Cases (case type 8)

Homicide
Sex Crime
Robbery
Assault
Theft/Burglary
Motor Vehicle Theft
Controlled Substance
Others

Involuntary Treatment Act Cases (case type 6)

Alcoholic Treatment (ALT)
ITA - Adult (MI)
ITA - Family (MIF)
ITA - Juvenile (MIJ)

Non-Jury Trial

A hearing is reported as a non-jury trial if an opening statement is made, waived, or reserved.

Pending Case

A case is defined as pending if it is unresolved and active (not in suspense).

Post-disposition Modifications

Petition to modify parenting plan after the resolution of the original case, based on the modification schedule.

Probate and Guardianship Cases (case type 5)

ABS - Absentee
AOS - Affidavit of Successor
ASE - Affidavit of Small Estate
DSC - Disclaimer
EST - Estate
FNW - Foreign Will
G/E - Guardianship/Estate
GDE - Guardianship of the Estate
GDN - Guardianship
GDP - Guardianship of the Person
LGD - Limited Guardianship
LGE - Limited Guardianship of the Estate
LGP - Limited Guardianship of the Person
MGD - Minor Guardianship
MSC - Miscellaneous
MST - Minor Settlement
NJB - Non Judicial Binding/TEDRA Agreement
NNC - Non Probate Notice to Creditor
POA - Petition for Relief (RCW 11.94) /Power of Attorney
RGR - Registration of Guardianship
RTR - Registration of Trust /Trust Situs
SNT - Special Needs Trust
TDR - Trust/Estate Dispute Resolution
TRS - Trust
WLL - Will Only

Resolution

A case is resolved if all issues in the complaint are fully adjudicated.

Suspended Case

A case is placed in suspense status from active status during the reporting period.

Suspense Status

A case is on suspense status if it is on warrant, appeal, stay, mediation, arbitration (“Deferred Prosecution” is not a suspense status, but is treated as a resolution).

Trial

A hearing set before a judge or jury in which all the issues in the case are meant to be resolved. A trial normally includes opening statements to the court or jury stating what evidence will show, introduction of witnesses and exhibits for direct and cross examination, final arguments to the court or jury in which counsel argue both the evidence and the law, and judgment by the court or jury stating what the facts of the case are and what law applies to the facts. In a jury case, it also includes the selection of the jury. A trial can be held for one or more cases. A single trial may be held to adjudicate more than one case (as defined above).